



DHEC's Office of Solid Waste Reduction and Recycling

For Your Information...

Household Hazardous Products

They are in everyone's home.

The average American home, in fact, has about 100 pounds of the stuff stored in the basement, garage or even under the kitchen sink. And Americans generate about 1.6 million tons of it every year, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

What are they?

They are household hazardous products.

Household hazardous products are leftover products that can be hazardous to human health and the environment if not properly used or disposed. The EPA considers a substance hazardous if it can catch fire, react or explode when mixed with other substances and if it is corrosive or toxic.

The definition includes many products that probably are stored in your home today.

Consider yard-care products. Herbicides, pesticides, fungicides and fertilizers are examples of household hazardous products. In the kitchen, examples include ammonia based cleaners, drain and oven cleaners and floor care products. In the bathroom, household hazardous products include nail polish, nail polish remover, tub and toilet cleaners and hair-care products. Do you work on home improvement projects? Remember, paints, paint thinners, wood preservatives, varnishes and the like are household hazardous products.

Don't forget the car. Car products such as paint, polish, fluids and cleaning products are examples of household hazardous products. Have a hobby?

Hobby products that can be hazardous include gun-cleaning solvents, photographic chemicals, glues and paints.

How can you tell if something is hazardous?

Carefully read the product label. Key words such as warning, flammable, irritant, poison or explosive will reinforce to you that the product is hazardous.

What are the possible dangers?

Improper disposal of household hazardous products can include pouring them down the drain, on the ground, into storm sewers and, in some cases, even putting them in your household trash. The dangers may not be

immediately obvious, but improper disposal can harm the environment and threaten human health. Certain types of household hazardous products have the potential to contaminate wastewater treatment plants and septic tanks if poured down the toilet or drain. Sanitation workers can be injured if you dispose of these products in your household garbage.

In addition, household hazardous products always pose a threat to children and pets if left around the house.

For more information on how to safely and properly use, dispose, reuse, recycle and store household hazardous products, see the lists on the back of this page. Call **1-800-768-7348** or visit **www.scdhec.net/** **recycle** for more information.



Household Hazardous Products

Smart Things to Do

- Before making a purchase, carefully **read the label** and make sure the product will do the job you want.
- **Buy only what you need.** Buying large quantities of a hazardous substance is not a bargain. Waste will eventually require disposal, which will cost you or your community money.
- **Use all of it** instead of throwing it away.
- **Keep unused products in original containers.** Store away from children, pets and heat sources.
- **Reduce your use** of hazardous products around the house. Many excellent non-toxic alternatives exist in your local health food store as well as some local grocery stores.
- **Recycle!** Motor oil, some batteries and paint are recyclable in some communities.
- **Never mix hazardous products together.**
- **Always follow directions on how to use the product** and the safety measures that need to be taken while using the product. For example, use ear and eye protection, gloves and protective clothing. Always ensure there is good ventilation, too.
- **Dispose of household hazardous products properly.** Call your local solid waste department, DHEC's Recycling Hot Line at **1-800-768-7348** or a company who handles hazardous waste for more information.
- **Never dump anything on the ground or down the drain.**



Tips for Proper Disposal

- See if your community has a facility that collects these products throughout the year. Some facilities have exchange areas for leftover paints, solvents, pesticides and other products. These products can be used by someone else instead of throwing them away.
- Some communities may have special collection days for household hazardous products. Contact your county recycling coordinator.
- You may be able to drop off some products at local businesses for recycling or proper disposal.

Benefits of Proper Management

- The reduction and recycling of household hazardous products conserves resources and energy that would be used in the production of more products.
- The reuse of household hazardous products may save money and reduce the need for generating hazardous substances.
- The proper disposal of household hazardous products prevents pollution that could harm human health and the environment.



Office of Solid Waste Reduction and Recycling
1-800-768-7348
www.scdhec.net/recycle

DHEC's Office of Solid Waste Reduction and Recycling FYIs provide general information on environmental topics. Readers are encouraged to reproduce this material. For more information about solid waste issues, please call **1-800-768-7348** or visit our Web site at www.scdhec.net/recycle. Please send written correspondence to: DHEC's Office of Solid Waste Reduction and Recycling, 2600 Bull Street, Columbia, SC 29201.